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Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-11 IO-13 ISO-00 ARA-10 CIAE-00
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PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11 TRSE-00 OMB-01 EB-08
AID-05 HA-05 MCT-01 ACDA-12 OES-07 /149 W
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R 150939Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY DAKAR
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4488
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 DAKAR 4545

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (FOR PASSING INSTRUCTIONS)

DEPT PASS TO OAU COLLECTIVE

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, SG
SUBJECT: WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED FROM THE SENGHOR VISIT

1. SUMMARY: SENGHOR'S VISIT HELPED US LEARN WHY HE FEELS SO STRONGLY ABOUT THE SOVIET-CUBAN THREAT IN AFRICA COMPARED TO OTHER AFRICANS WHO DO NOT APPEAR TO BE OVERLY CONCERNED. HIS LONG EXPOSURE TO THE RUTHLESS, STALINIST COMMUNIST PARTY IN FRANCE LEFT HIM WITH THE BELIEF THAT NO COMMUNISTS, WHETHER RUSSIAN, CUBAN, OR OTHER CAN BE ENGAGED IN CONSTRUCTIVE WORK IN AFRICA. HIS DEEP COMMITMENT TO THE DIGNITY OF THE BLACK RACE LEADS HIM TO FEEL THAT THIS IS BEING VIOLATED BY THE CUBANS, SOVIETS AND ALGERIANS IN ANGOLA AND MAURITANIA.
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SENGHOR FEELS THAT HIS WARNINGS AND HIS VISIT HAVE HELPED NUDGE U.S. OPINION TOWARD THE VIEW THAT THERE IS A DANGER TO US INTERESTS IN AFRICA IN THE CUBAN-SOVIET MILITARY PRESENCE. THAT IS REALLY ALL HE WANTED, AND HIS REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE TO AN AFRICAN SELF-HELP EFFORT APPEARS MODEST AND REASONABLE. END SUMMARY.

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2. ACCORDING TO THE PRIME MINISTER AND OTHERS WHOM I HAVE SEEN DURING THE PAST FEW DAYS, PRESIDENT SENGHOR IS PLEASED WITH HIS JUNE 2-9 PRIVATE VISIT TO NEW YOR WASHINGTON. HE FELT THAT HE HAD AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE TO DELIVER ON BEHALF OF THE AFRICAN MODERATES, AND THAT HE WAS GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO ARGUE HIS POINT OF VIEW BEFORE THE HIGHEST LEVELS OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT. THE SENGHOR VISIT TOOK PLACE RIGHT IN THE MIDST OF A MAJOR DEBATE IN AMERICAN POLITICAL CIRCLES ON THE NATURE OF THE US REACTION TO SOVIET/CUBAN ACTIVITIES IN AFRICA. SENGHOR FEELS THAT HE MADE A USEFUL CONTRIBUTION TO THAT DEBATE. AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND, THE QUESTION THAT I WOULD LIKE TO EXPLORE IN THIS MESSAGE IS WHAT CONCLUSIONS CAN WE DRAW FROM THE SENGHOR VISIT THAT MIGHT GIVE US SOME ADDED PERSPECTIVES ON THE NATURE OF THE AFRICAN PROBLEM.

3. SENGHOR IS A PRODUCT OF THE FRENCH EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM OF THE 1930'S, AND OF THE FRENCH POLITICAL SYSTEM OF THE 1940'S AND 50'S. LOOKING BACK AT OUR CONVERSATIONS SINCE JULY, 1977, ESPECIALLY TWO LONG TALKS WE HAD IN NEW YORK DURING THE VISIT, I IDENTIFY ONE MAJOR THEME RELATED TO SENGHOR'S FRENCH EXPERIENCE. THROUGH HIS TEACHERS, FRIENDS, AND POLITICAL ASSOCIATIONS, SENGHOR HAS HAD EXTENSIVE CONTACTS WITH THE FRENCH COMMUNIST PARTY. HE HAS KNOWN THE PCF INTIMATELY, AND REACHED THE CONFIDENTIAL

CONCLUSION MANY YEARS AGO THAT THE PARTY IS THE MOST STALINIST AND RUTHLESS OF THE FREE WORLD'S MARXIST GROUPINGS. NOTHING IN RECENT TIMES, INCLUDING THE EURO-COMMUNIST PHENOMENON, HAS CAUSED HIM TO MODIFY THIS VIEW. NOT ONLY DOES HE DISAGREE WITH THE IDEOLOGY AND METHODS OF THE PCF, BUT HE BELIEVES THE PCF WILL STOP AT NOTHING TO DESTROY THOSE FORMER FRIENDS IN THE THIRD WORLD WHO TURNED AGAINST THE PARTY IN FAVOR OF DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM, THE WORST HERESY KNOWN TO THE STALINISTS. HE ALSO BELIEVES THE PCF IS CLOSELY TIED TO THE SOVIETS. IN DESCRIBING SENGHOR'S VIEW OF THE PCF AND THE SOVIETS, I CAN SAY WITHOUT HESITATION THAT THE WORD FEAR IS NOT TOO STRONG. HE FREQY TALKS ABOUT THE PROSPECT OF SOVIET-PCF ASSASSINATION ATTEMPTS AGAINST MODERATE AFRICANS, AND STATES THAT WHILE HE IS NOT WORRIED AT AGE 72, THE YOUNGER MODERATE CHIEFS OF STATE REFRAIN FROM SPEAKING OUT FOR THIS VERY REASON.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 3 DAKAR 4545

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (FOR PASSING INSTRUCTIONS)

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4. SENGHOR'S FEARS HAVE MORE THAN JUST A THEORETICAL BASE. EVER SINCE SENEGAL BECAME INDEPENDENT IN 1960, SENGHOR HAS OBSERVED PCF AND SOVIET ACTIVITIES DESIGNED TO STIR UP AND ASSIT INTERNAL OPPOSITION ELEMENTS. UNTIL 1972. SENGHOR AND HIS ASSOCIATES FELT RELATIVELY CONFIDENT IN THEIR ABILITY TO COPE WITH PCF FINANCING AND TRAINING OF OPPOSITION ELEMENTS, AS WELL AS A VARIETY OF SUBVERSIVE OPERATIONS BY THE SOVIET EMBASSY. BUT THE 1972 CUBAN ARMED INTERVENTION IN ANGOLA CHANGED EVERYTHING PSYCHOLOGICALLY. IN SENGHOR'S VIEW, THE CUBAN ARMY IN ANGOLA REPRESENTED THE FIRST EXTENSION OF DIRECT SOVIET MILITARY SUPPORT TO FAVORED ELEMENTS IN A PURELY INTERNAL AFRICAN CONFLICT. UNLIKE A NUMBER OF
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OUTSIDE OBSERVERS WHO SAW ANGOLA AS ESSENTIALLY A SOVIET/CUBAN TARGET OF OPPORTUNITY, SENGHOR INTERPRETED THE

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CUBAN EXPEDITION AS AN ESCALATION OF AN ALREADY EXISTING PATTERN OF SOVIET INTERVENTION IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF AFRICAN STATES. IN SHORT, SENGHOR LOOKED AT ANGOLA AND REACHED THE FOLLOWING CONCLUSION: THE SOVIETS HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO UNDERMINE MODERATES THROUGH THE PCF OR THEIR OWN EMBASSIES. NOY ARE USING CUBAN TROOPS TO BRING ILLEGITIMATE OPPOSITION GROUPS TO POWER. WHAT IS TO STOP THEM FROM CREATING AND FINANCING SUCH GROUPS IN MY OWN COUNTRY, RECOGNIZING THEM, AND THEN PROVIDING THEM WITH ARMED CUBAN BACKING TO TAKE OVER? PCF AND SOVIET EMBASSY SUBVERSION IS ONE THING. BUT CUBAN SOLDIERS ARE ANOTHER.

5. TO MAKE MATTERS WORSE FOR SENGHOR, NOT ONLY DID HE REACH THIS ALARMING CONCLUSION, BUT HE FOUND THAT OTHER OBSERVERS, ESPECIALLY AMERICAN AFRICANISTS, WERE REACHING TOTALLY DIFFERENT CONCLUSIONS ABOUT ANGOLA; THAT IT REPRESENTED AN UNSTABLE TARGET OF OPPORTUNITY AND NOT A PATTERN OF SOVIET EXPANSIONISM; THAT THE CUBANS WERE REACTING TO SOUTH AFRICAN INTERVENTION AND NOT WORKING FOR THE SOVIETS; AND THAT ANY AFRICAN COUNTRY WHICH PRACTICES DEMOCRACY, HAS GOOD HUMAN RIGHTS, AND KEEPS EVERYONE WELL FED, HAS NOTHING TO FEAR. BASED ON HIS EXPERIENCE WITH THE PCF AND THE SOVIET UNION, AND HAVING LIVED IN FRANCE DURING MUNICH AND APPEASEMENT, SENGHOR CONSIDERED THIS VIEW INCREDIBLY NAIVE. THAT IS THE BASIS FOR SENGHOR'S STATEMENTS TO ME AND OTHERS THAT AMERICAN THINKING ABOUT AFRICA IS MUDDLED. IN EFFECT, SENGHOR FEELS WE DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT IS REALLY GOING ON. OUR TIMID INVOLVEMENT IN SHABA ONE, AND OUR NEUTRALITY ON THE WESTERN SAHARA SERVED TO REINFORCE
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SENGHOR'S VIEWS SINCE HE CONSIDERS THESE PROBLEMS TO BE PART OF THE PATTERN OF SOVIET EXPANSIONISM IN AFRICA IN LINE WITH LENIN'S THEORY THAT AFRICA IS THE KEY TO EUROPE. THE VIGOROUS AMERICAN RESPONSE TO SHABA TWO JUST A FEW DAYS BEFORE SENGHOR'S ARRIVAL IN THE US HELPED MODIFY HIS VIEW, AND GAVE HIM HOPE THAT HIS ANALYSIS OF THE SITUATION IN AFRICA MIGHT YET BE ACCEPTED BY THE USG LEADERSHIP. IN SHORT, SENGHOR DID NOT COME TO THE UNITED STATES WITH THE OBJECTIVE OF PERSUADING US TO DO SOMETHING. ABOVE ALL, HE WANTED US TO AGREE WITH HIM ABOUT THEER. IT IS MY IMPRESSION THAT HE WAS NOT DISAPPOINTED.

6. THE FOREGOING DESCRIBED THE PROFOUND INFLUENCE OF SENGHOR'S FRENCH EXPERIENCES ON HIS PERCEPTIONS OF CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN SECURITY PROBLEMS. IMPORTANT AS THESE INFLUENCES HAVE BEEN, HOWEVER, WE SHOULD NOT MAKE THE

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MISTAKE OF CATEGORIZING SENGHOR AS A BLACK FRENCHMAN, WHICH IS THE WAY A NUMBER OF ANGLOPHONE AFRICANS VIEW HIM. NOTHING COULD BE FURTHER FROM THE TRUTH. SENGHOR IS FIRST AND FOREMOST A BLACK INTERNATIONALIST. DESPITE HIS ADVOCACY OF CULTURAL INTERCHANGE AND RACIAL MISCEGENATION, HIS FIRST AND FIERCEST LOYALTY IS TO BLACKNESS. THIS ELEMENT IS ALSO VERY IMPORTANT IN HIS ANALYSIS OF AFRICAN PROBLEMS.

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (PASSING INSTRUCTIONS AND DELETION OF PARA ELEVEN)

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7. IN ANGOLA, SENGHOR WAS NOT DISTURBED BY SAVIMBI'S USE OF SOUTH AFRICAN ASSISTANCE. "WHEN YOU ARE AT WAR, YOU WILL TAKE ASSISTANCE FROM THE DEVIL," HE TOLD A VISITING JOURNALIST. WHAT BOTHERS HIM IS THAT THE MPLA, IN HIS VIEW, REPRESENTS ONLY THE MIDDLE CLASS MULATTOS OF LUANDA CITY. SAVIMBI, ON THE OTHER HAND, REPRESENTS THE MASSES OF THE ANGOLAN BLACK AFRICANS. NOT ONLY ARE THE SOVIETS AND CUBANS PURSUING THEIR STRATEGIC DESIGNS IN

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ANGOLA, BUT ARE ALSO HELPING TO KEEP THE BLACK MAJORITY
FROM THEIR RIGHTFUL CLAIM TO POWER IN SENGHOR'S VIEW.

8. IN MAURITANIA AND THE WESTERN SAHARA, SENGHOR
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BELIEVES THE ALGERIANS ARE PURSUING THEIR OBJECTIVE OF
SUBVERTING THE BLACK GOVERNMENTS OF THE SAHEL BY
PLAYING ON RACIAL ANIMOSITIES AMONG THE TUAREGS. HE
CALLS THE ALGERIANS RACISTS WHO WANT TO PERPETUATE THE
ARAB-BLACK CLEAVAGE IN AFRICA IN FAVOR OF ALGERIAN
HEGEMONY. HE CALLS THE CUBANS NO BETTER THAN THE
PORTUGUESE BECAUSE HE CLAIMS THEY PILLAGE AFRICAN
PROPERTY AND VIOLATE AFRICAN WOMEN. IN SOUTH AFRICA,
SENGHOR SAYS THAT OUR POLICY OF AN ARMS EMBAS
USELESS. WHAT IS NEEDED IS AN OIL EMBARGO. THIS IS A
LOT STRONGER VIEW THAN EXPRESSED BY SOME OF THE FRONT-
LINE STATES. IN SHORT, BECAUSE SENGHOR IS A MODERATE,
A CONSERVATIVE, AND FRENCH-INFLUENCED, SOME PEOPLE TEND
TO DISMISS HIM AS A FALSE AFRICAN. BUT THIS IS A MISTAKE,
SENGHOR IS AN AFRICAN FIRST, AND VIEWS MOST AFRICAN
STRATEGIC PROBLEMS THROUGH RACIAL GLASSES. IN HIS
ANALYSIS, THE SOVIETS AND THEIR SURROGATES ARE WILLING
TO EXPLOIT RACIAL DIFFERENCES AND SUPPORT RACIAL
MINORITIES FOR THEIR OWN STRATEGIC ENDS. HE DOES NOT
BELIEVE THAT ABOUT THE FRENCH OR THE AMERICANS.

9. WHERE DOES ALL THIS LEAVE US IN OUR EVALUATION OF
THE MESSAGE THAT SENGHOR BROUGHT TO WASHINGTON? IS HE
JUST A 72-YEAR OLD ANACHRONISM WHO DOES NOT SPEAK FOR
THE MAINSTREAM EVEN OF FRANCOPHONE AFRICAN MUCH LESS THE
ANGLOPHONES? OR DOES HE REPRESENT A DEEP CURRENT OF
FEAR AND APPREHENSION? THE ANSWER TO THAT QUESTION CAN
ONLY COME FROM MY COLLEAGUES THROUGHOUT AFRICA. MY
FEELING HOWEVER IS THAT SENGHOR IS NOT ALONE IN HIS
VIEWPOINT.

10. SENGHOR MET WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF SEVERAL POINTS
OF VIEW ON AFRICA DURING HIS STAY IN THE US. FROM THOSE
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WHO ADVOCATE A MAXIMUM US REACTION TO SOVIET-CUBAN
ACTIVITIES IN AFRICA TO THOSE WHO SAY WE SHOULD DO
NOTHING, AND THOSE IN BETWEEN, I WAS PLEASED TO NOTE
THAT NOBODY TOLD SENGHOR THAT HE REALLY HAS NO
PROBLEM. EVERYONE APPEARED TO AGREE THAT CUBAN TROOPS

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IN AFRICA ARE BAD NEWS. THIS IS ESSENTIALLY WHAT SENGHOR
WANTED TO HEAR, AND I BELIEVE A MAJOR GAP IN UNDER-
STANDING HAS BEEN CLOSED. SENGHOR HAS SAID THAT HIS IS
NOT ASKING FOR US DIRECT INTERVENTION, BUT FEELS THE US
SHOULD HELP AFRICAN MODERATES OBTAIN THE MEANS TO SOLVE
SOME OF THESE PROBLEMS WITHOUT EXTERNAL INTERVENTION.
HE DID NOT NEGLECT ECONOMIC REQUIREMENTS IN ANY OF HIS
PRESENTATIONS.
I BELIEVE THAT MAINSTREAM WASHINGTON FOUND THSSAGE
NOT UNREASONABLE.
COHEN

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